



Ref:85625

31 August 2020

**Hon Martin Pakula
Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events
Level 26, 121 Exhibition Street
Melbourne VIC 3000**

Dear Minister,

Rock climbing in the Grampians National Park

I continue to be approached by constituents concerned at the actions of Parks Victoria (PV) in prohibiting rock climbing from 550 square kilometres of the Grampians National Park pending finalisation of the Greater Grampians Landscape Management Plan (GGLMP).

I am advised that 78% of the 125 sites assessed by PV to March 2020 showed no cultural heritage and no environmental sensitivities that would be likely to be significantly impacted by rock climbing.

Further, the majority of the 30 assessed sites in the Special Protection Areas where climbers are excluded showed no evidence to support the claim that climbers have caused harm to cultural heritage – indeed at a number of these sites there was no tangible cultural heritage identified.

I understand that PV have stated that they will not make any changes to the current prohibitions until the GGLMP is finalised and that the GGLMP process will not produce detailed, assessment-based management plans for each section of cliff in the Park. The completion of assessments and plans for each identified site will, optimistically, take years to complete.

Recreational climbers have already been kept out of some of the best, most celebrated climbing sites on the planet for a year and a half, and will be kept out for years to come, despite the lack of evidence that low—impact climbing has or would have any significant impact at many of these sites.

This has directly resulted in many local businesses around the Grampians experiencing a significant downturn in business since the prohibitions were introduced in 2019.

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Without exception the operators of these local businesses see themselves as responsible for educating and sharing a respect for the environment and local cultural heritage sites with those who climb.

It is requested that in places where PV has already carried out cultural heritage and environmental assessments and found no evidence of significant risk to cultural heritage or the natural environment by walking or low-impact climbing, the prohibitions on climbing be rescinded.

This will ensure that rock climbing can continue in the Grampians National Park in the environmentally sustainable and respectful way that it has for decades, while protecting the economic viability of our local tourism industry.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,



Emma Kealy
Member for Lowan

CC – Bridget Vallenge MP, Shadow Minister for Environment and Climate Change
David Hodgett MP, Shadow Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events